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The Development of the French Monarchy under Louis VI. By JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON, A.B. University of Chicago, 1895.—xii, 113 pp.

This monograph was the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago. Like all other investigations in the field of mediæval European history by American students forced to rely upon the material accessible here, it was conducted under great difficulties. Mr. Thompson deserves praise for his careful study of this material; but, as was to be expected, Luchaire had left little for him to glean. This monograph adds nothing to our knowledge of the subject; yet, with the exception of Walker's notable dissertation on *Philip Augustus*, it is the only work of any value in the English language on the history of the French state during the later Middle Ages. It is true that in some instances Mr. Thompson advances new propositions; but in all cases, as it seems to us, these have no scientific basis. He has not avoided the snare that lies in wait for every investigator of a special period — the tendency to overestimate the relative importance of the subject treated. Mr. Thompson has a decided tendency to attribute to Louis VI many advances in the royal power that took place in the next century.

One instance of this tendency is his attribution to Louis VI of that great innovation in feudal law, by which appeals ran to the king's court. Mr. Thompson's account of the appellate jurisdiction of the royal court in the time of Louis VI is very misleading. He says (p. 39):

The practice of appeal as instituted by Louis VI was an entire interpolation in the feudal law of the land. . . . Hitherto the dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine, the counts of Brittany, Flanders, Champagne and Toulouse had enjoyed the privilege of final decision.

The unwary reader is thus led to infer that this privilege ceased in the reign of Louis VI. This, however, is by no means true. In fact, the *curia regis* of Louis VI had absolutely no appellate jurisdiction, except in certain cases when it reversed the decision rendered by the court of an ecclesiastical vassal.¹ This was so because of the close relations always existing between church and crown, and because the king appointed these bishops and abbots. For instance, in the case of the appeal of the bishop of Arras, which Mr. Thompson cites to support his assertion, Louis had a direct interest in interfering, be-

¹ Cf. Luchaire, *Institutions Monarchiques*, I, 301, and Manuel, p. 556; Langlois, *Philippe III*, p. 276.

cause, as he says, "*advocati et patroni Atrebatensis sumus ecclesie.*"¹ The only other case that Mr. Thompson cites is that of some nobles who complained of the tyranny of their lord, Humbaud of Sainte-Sévère, and begged Louis "*aut ad exequendum justiciam cogere, aut jure pro injuria castrum lege salica amittere.*"² In this there is absolutely no trace of appellate jurisdiction: possibly it might be construed as an instance of the feudally legal interference of the suzerain in the case of *defectus justitiae*, but that has only a superficial resemblance to appellate jurisdiction.

Then Mr. Thompson claims (p. 57) that in 1137 Louis instituted a general tax, not feudal in nature, the first levied by any Capetian. This assertion is based on a passage from the *Chronicon Morigniacensis monasterii*, relating Louis VI's preparations for the marriage of his son to Eleanor of Aquitaine. It reads: "*Imperialis itaque edicti taxatione ubique publicata, militum agmina non parva propteranter conveniunt. . . .*"³ Mr. Thompson translates *taxatio* as taxation. From the context, however, this rendering seems to us not legitimate. *Taxatio* is evidently used here in the sense of *aestimatio*, that is, estimate of the *talía* or number of men the vassals and subjects were bound to furnish for the marital expedition. It is true that, so far as we know, there is no other instance of the use of *taxatio* in exactly this sense; but, on the other hand, its synonym, *taxa*, in the phrase *taxa gentium*, was used as the equivalent of *talía*.⁴ Even admitting the correctness of Mr. Thompson's version of this passage, it seems at any rate a poor foundation on which to make so dogmatic and revolutionary a statement. In the first place, no manuscript copy of this chronicle is extant,⁵ and consequently we cannot tell how much has been interpolated in later years. Then Suger, who was the king's chief adviser, would surely have mentioned so novel a step in his *Life of Louis VI*. We find, however, that Suger's account⁶ makes no mention of it, and that his version agrees with our interpretation of the passage given above.

Mr. Thompson has an unfortunate tendency to make dogmatic assertions in the text, and then to qualify them in the notes. For instance, he asserts in the text that Louis VI first enunciated the

¹ Langlois, Textes relatifs à l'Histoire du Parlement, p. 12; Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France, XV, 342 n.

² Suger's Vita Lud. Crassi, ed. Molinier, pp. 36, 37, 137, 138.

³ Recueil des Historiens, XII, 83.

⁴ See Du Cange, "taxa" and "talía."

⁵ Potthast's Bibliotheca Historica, I, 279.

⁶ Ed. Molinier, p. 128.

doctrine that the king *ipso facto* can render homage to no one, though this honor has usually been assigned to Philip Augustus.¹ This contention is based on a passage from one of Suger's works,² the genuineness of which, as Mr. Thompson himself admits in the notes, has been very much disputed. Consequently, this passage is no scientific basis for so positive an assertion.

Exception can also be taken to Mr. Thompson's definition of liege-homage, and to his statement that Louis VI instituted this peculiar form of homage. Then, again, Mr. Thompson criticises Lothair (p. 3) with undue severity for attempting to recover Lotharingia. In reality it was a very statesmanlike act on the part of Lothair, for he needed some territorial basis to neutralize the preponderating power of the Capetians.³

Thus, though his monograph contains much that is sound and valuable, it should be used with caution by one not acquainted with French mediæval history. In spite of the opinion we have of Mr. Thompson's method of using the sources, his careful study of them leads us to expect better work from his pen when he has overcome his enthusiasm for novelties.

GEORGE LOUIS BEER.

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¹ Brussel, Usage des Fiefs, I, 152; Walker, Philip-Augustus, p. 9.

² Recueil des Historiens, XII, 50 n.

³ Cf. Monod, Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1896, p. 15.